

Recent MRC happenings & upcoming opportunities. Read on!



Winter Fire Safety Tips

It seems there has been an abundance of devastating house fires this winter season. I reached out to one of my partners, Chief Juan Bonilla with the Donnelly Fire Department to provide some winter fire safety tips to keep you and your family, and your homes safe this winter.



By Chief Juan Bonilla, Donnelly Fire Department

Home fires are more prevalent in winter than in any other season. This is due in part to an increase in cooking and heating fires. Holiday decorations and winter storms that can interrupt electrical service and cause people to turn to alternative heating sources also contribute to the increased risk of fire in winter. Winter fires can be prevented by following a few safety tips. The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) website has safety tip materials to follow.

Here are few tips to get you started:

1. Have your furnace checked. It's worth the money to hire a professional to inspect and service your furnace once a year. If it's going to conk out, it's better to know trouble is coming.
2. Have your chimneys and vents checked. Fireplaces produce creosote which can ignite. If you light fires frequently, you need a chimney sweep service once a year. When you burn wood, make sure it's dry and seasoned so that it produces more flame and less smoke.
3. Test smoke alarms. Make sure batteries are fresh. Place smoke alarms in the kitchen, laundry room and in bedrooms.
4. Cover the fireplace with a screen. Tempered glass or a metal screen helps protect sparks from leaving the fireplace. Even so, make sure that children and pets sit at least three feet away when you light a fire in the fireplace.
5. Beware of lit candles. Candles can set the mood for relaxation, and that's how they become forgotten or knocked over by kids or pets. Light candles only when you're around to watch them and blow them out when you're ready to leave the room. Ditto for cigarettes, pipes, etc. If you're going to smoke, try to do it outside.
6. Beware of space heaters. The name should give you a clue -- space heaters need space. Like fireplaces, people and pets should

not be allowed to sit any closer than three feet. Don't put space heaters near curtains, tablecloths or other fluttering fabrics. Make sure the space heaters you buy have automatic shut-offs before reaching dangerous temperatures.

7. Know how to put out kitchen fires quickly. Water doesn't help a grease fire, which can get out of control. Keep salt and baking soda on hand to sprinkle liberally on pan fires. Keep lids handy to put on top of pots and pans that get too hot.



Baby Formula Recall Sets the Stage for Call Center Exercise

A statewide recall of baby formula could make for a serious issue, and one that public health would play a big role in responding to. Calls with questions and concern from the public would likely flood our phone lines, and CDHD, with the help of MRC volunteers, would then initiate the health department's Emergency Information Center.

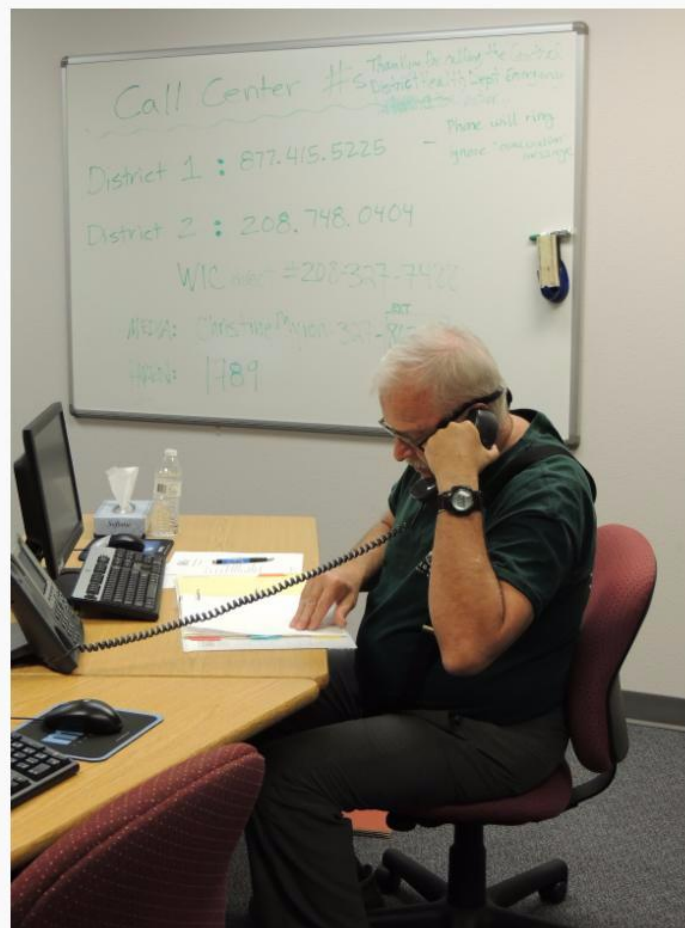
During an emergency situation, MRC are responsible for staffing the emergency call center located at Central District Health.

On January 15, CDHD staff and MRC volunteers participated in a statewide exercise of the call center. Volunteers took turns responding to questions and calling other districts in the state with questions, posing as the public. The CDHD MRC volunteers worked directly with Health District 1 in Coeur d' Alene and Health District 2 in Lewiston.

In the past, this resource has been stood up for the H1N1 Pandemic Response, and more recently for a Salmonella outbreak in Boise. Needless to say, it's very important to exercise the call center!

Thank you to the following volunteers for making this year's exercise such a great success!

- Robbie Leatham
- Mervan Newbold
- Dale Argyle
- Jo Scantling
- Johanna Butler



MRC Volunteer Dale Argyle responds to questions during the call center exercise



Volunteers Needed in May for Family Friendly Exercise

This year Central District Health will partner with Southwest District Health for the annual full scale exercise. For the exercise, we will be standing up and staffing a co-located American Red Cross general population shelters with a Medical Shelter. This is a two-day exercise occurring on **Tuesday, May 10** (exercise set up) and **Wednesday, May 11** (actual exercise play).

Southwest District Health will be responsible for the Medical Shelter portion and Central District Health will be responsible for the General Population Shelter portion. This is a great opportunity to activate and exercise the volunteer sharing agreement between the American Red Cross and the CDHD MRC group.

We need a large number of volunteers in order to make this one successful so mark your calendars! This is a family friendly MRC event so your spouses and children are welcome as well!

Volunteer Positions:

- 10-12 volunteers to assist with set up on May 10th - 8:30 am - 5 pm - O'Connor Fieldhouse in Caldwell - CDHD can assist with transportation.
- 12 MRC / ARC Task Force Volunteers to staff the American Red Cross Shelter during the exercise on May 11th from 8 am -5 pm at O'Connor Fieldhouse - volunteers must provide their own transportation - these volunteers must have completed the MRC / ARC task force training.
- 100 volunteers to act as clients at the American Red Cross / Medical Shelter at O'Connor Fieldhouse in Caldwell on May 11th. Volunteers will need to arrive at 8 am and will be done by 1 pm- This is a family friendly opportunity! Volunteers will need to provide their own transportation.

Please let Lisa know if you are able to assist with this opportunity and which role you would like to fill. mrc@cdhd.idaho.gov or 327-8597



TRIVIA Time!

This month we are doing something different with trivia.

CDHD Medical Reserve Corps has a new Facebook page! I encourage you to like our page in order to stay up-to-date on upcoming training and volunteer opportunities. At the end of January, all those who have liked our page will be entered into a drawing for a prize.

Like us on Facebook 

STAY CONNECTED:

